

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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1. Quality of exhibits as contrasted with previous years: 25X1

the 1955 Fair is the poorest yet. Although the Messeamt had made attempts to camouflage the deficiencies in quality of the exhibits, the real state of things was readily apparent to an expert. The idea of the "Potemkin village" was extensively used: i.e., an industrial exhibit which, at first sight, seemed in perfect condition, could not work because an important part had been replaced by an Attrappe or sham substitute. This was particularly noticeable in exhibits which normally would have required certain parts made from such critical items as copper, tungsten, etc. Occasionally the entire product consisted of a repainted and repolished item which had been produced as early as 1941-1943. (An example of this was the exhibition of purported new textile-weaving machinery which, in fact, was manufactured in Germany in 1942.)
2. Indications of food shortage: In past years the Fair authorities made successful efforts to ensure that foreign guests were well fed and housed. In the 1955 fair it was not uncommon to see 200 accredited visitors to the Fair queued up to purchase eggs or meat dishes only to learn, after an hour, that only the first 60 persons in line were going to get anything more than wurst.
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the use of Attrappen and paint and polish on some of the industrial exhibits at the Leipzig Fair was necessary to hide the fact that the equipment in those cases was either old or was missing essential parts. This was particularly true in textile machinery. 25X1
technical progress in agricultural machinery and electrical equipment (particularly turbines) had been good over the past two years. Soviet agricultural machinery was especially praised for its technical efficiency and durability. 25X1

The optics and precision-instrument equipment exhibited was of high quality and the East German distributors felt these items could compete easily with similar goods produced in the West.

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(Note: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

S-E-C-R-E-T

- 2 -

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4. [redacted] although the East German optics industry was presently holding its own with Western competition in terms of quality, [redacted] the tempo of technical progress was now behind that of the free world, particularly West Germany. [redacted]

5. As of May 1955, it was still impossible to procure precise data on the extent and nature of commodities sold to Western firms or individuals during the Leipzig Fair of March 1955. (The Leipziger Messeamt does not make available any records of sales negotiations to "unauthorized" persons.) [redacted]

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[redacted] sales contracts were lower in both quantity and value than in 1953 and 1954. In the category of individual barter negotiations the total value of transactions was slightly less than 2/3 of the 1954 Fair. (Barter transactions are much preferred by East German economic agencies, because such deals permit the import of commodities not covered by clearing agreements.)

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